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ABSTRACT

More than 500 intergenerational literacy programs exist in the United States, yet the idea is untested and it is difficult to identify and classify these programs. A typology identifies and classifies programs by key components and provides examples of each type. A typology, useful to practitioners, helps in planning programs, discussing them, and in training staff. Four generic program types have different program goals and characteristics: (1) parent/child--goal is positive, long-term family intervention; (2) adult/child--goal is supplementary, for skill building and enjoyment; (3) adult alone--goal is parent education; and (4) child alone--goal is supplementary, school-related literacy improvement for children. Each lends itself to levels of evaluation: (1) preimplementation (needs assessment); (2) accountability (program documentation); (3) program clarification (formative evaluation); (4) progress toward objectives; and (5) program impact. At the program level several factors must be considered--program design, implementation, and outcomes. In addition, at the participant level, many factors must be considered--demographic information, literacy skills, environment, attitude, parent/child interactions, child personal characteristics/achievements, parent personal characteristics/achievements, family characteristics, support and resources, and parenting behavior and attitudes. (NLA)

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A Typology of Family and Intergenerational Literacy Programs: Implications for Evaluation

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A TYPOLOGY OF FAMILY AND INTERGENERATIONAL LITERACY PROGRAMS: IMPLICATIONS FOR EVALUATION

ABSTRACT

Family and intergenerational programs are an exciting new idea in the delivery of literacy services to adults and children. It is estimated that there are more than 500 programs in existence across the country, sponsored by federal and state governments, foundations, agencies, organizations, and increasingly, corporations. Yet the idea is largely untested and there is only modest evidence to date that programs are effective. Further, with the proliferation and variety of programs, it is difficult to identify and classify them-their titles can be misleading. Projects that call themselves "family" or "intergenerational" programs may not in fact, provide literacy services to the whole family, or across generations. For program design, implementation, assessment, and evaluation purposes, it is important to be able to distinguish programs from one another.

This paper offers a typology to identify and classify programs by key components, and offers examples of each type. A typology is useful for practitioners, researchers, and policy makers. It helps in planning programs, in discussing them, and in training staff. Its use enables a clearer picture of the availability of community services for literacy development, increases collaboration, and reduces redundancy in services. Since there are many ways to increase levels of literacy for individuals, families, and communities, no single model is necessarily better than another.

The four generic program types offered have different program goals and characteristics. Each lends itself to forms of evaluation. The paper describes a framework for decisions about evaluation with suggestions for domains of measurement that may be appropriate for four generic types.

A Typology of Family and Intergenerational Programs: Implications for Evaluation

Purpose

Increasingly, family and intergenerational literacy programs are implemented as mechanisms purported to "break the cycle of illiteracy" which continues to affect undereducated and educationally disadvantaged families across the country. As reported earlier (Nickse, 1990a: Nickse, 1989) program efforts are sponsored by both public and private organizations, with more than 500 such programs thought to be in operation. To date, theoretical and conceptual efforts lag behind practice. This paper presents four generic types of family/intergenerational literacy projects and describes key components of each. A framework for evaluation is presented with suggestions for measurement domains for each program type.

This schema may be helpful in clearing away some of the mystique surrounding evaluation of these programs at the local level. Its purpose is to provide a framework for program staff to think through appropriate and realistic evaluation strategies for specific types of family and intergenerational literacy programs.

Background

There is but modest evidence to date that family and intergenerational literacy programs work (Nickse, 1990b; Sticht, 1989). The most comprehensive evaluation underway at present is that of Even Start, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. Details of this national evaluation are described elsewhere (Nickse, 1990): a report to Congress is due in 1993. Yet sponsors are committing funds to this appealing approach in hope that it will help ameliorate persistent illiteracy.

Federal legislation is the primary source of support for programs. These include the Adult Education Act (Titles II and III); the Library and Construction Act (Titles I and VI); the Head Start Act; the Family Support Act of 1988 (Title IV-A); and several programs in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act: Chapter I, Even Start; Title VII Bilingual Education; and Title III, Part B, the Family School Partnership Program. States are a source of funding and a pioneer is Kentucky, with its Parent and Child Education program (PACE).

The private sector also funds family and intergenerational literacy programs. Corporations pilot programs (e.g., Stride Rite, Nissan, Chrysler) and Unions, too (e.g., Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers, Sheet Metal Workers, the UAW/GM Training Centers).

Organizations and community-based agencies implement programs, including Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW), and Ser,Inc., a national Hispanic organization. Volunteer literacy organizations have been awarded funding including Literacy Volunteers of America and Laubach Literacy. Foundation have taken leadership, including the Mac Arthur Foundation. The new Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy supports 10 programs nationally; the Kenan Family Trust supports programs in Kentucky and North Carolina, and also a new Center for Family Literacy in Louisville. Toyota has just given this Center $2 million to expand its more than 100 programs which are already operating in 27 states.

The largest demonstration of family and intergenerational literacy programs is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. Even Start, as it is titled, funds 122 programs this year and adds more programs as money is available (this years' funding is $48 million). It is expected that in the future, Even Start will become a state-administered program.

How well founded are these investments, in a time of budget constraints at the local, state, and national level? With so many jumping on board the family literacy bandwagon, is this a signal that another educational fad is aborning, or a significant new step in literacy service? Again, there is little evidence to date of program effectiveness because programs are new, some are unused to summative evaluation, and many are unable to afford evaluations even if the need was recognized.

Besides a lack of evidence that programs work, there is also a strange mix of titles and names given to these literacy services which confuse, rather than describe, programs. Some label themselves as "family" literacy programs but serve mostly mothers (not fathers); others serve mothers without the kids present any or all of the time; still others use foster grandparents to read to neighborhood kids. So, what is a "family" and what is an "intergenerational" literacy project? Is there really any difference? Why should it matter what a program is called?

The following Typology (Table 1) helps to distinguish one type from the other. It has proved useful in identifying critical differences between program types. It helps in defining program goals and expectations, and is thus useful in planning for their evaluation.

A Typology for Family and Intergenerational Literacy Programs

Adoption of a classification system or typology can clarify program components by describing key characteristics. A typology is useful for practitioners, researchers, and policy makers -- it helps in planning programs, in discussing them, and in training staff. It can be used to inventory literacy projects as a step in community needs assessment to identify and classify services, helping to avoid costly redundancies (Nickse, 1990a,b).

Of course, there are limitations to any typology -- it tends to simplify phenomena, which is both a strength and weakness. There are program examples of mixed model types, and there is variation within each type. For example, Even Start programs may all be called "family" literacy programs (Type 1) even though there is great variation among the programs themselves. Further, no single model or type is necessarily better than another, assuming a needs assessment has preceded the design of the program and influences the practice. There are many avenues within communities to improved literacy for adults and children.

(Enter Table 1 Here)

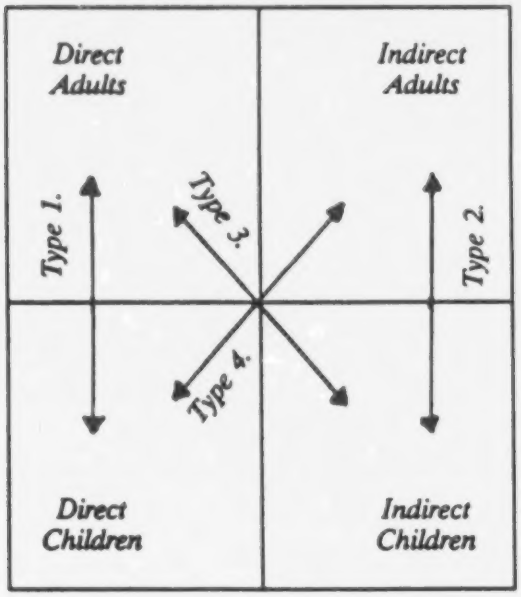
Key questions in using the Typology include these: who is the target population to be served? Are the adult and child both present together for literacy development any or all of the time? Is the "family" component abstract (indirect) or concrete (direct)? As an example, parent groups at a worksite learning hypothetically about reading to children with peer practice constitutes an indirect component--children and adults reading together constitutes a direct component.

Another key characteristic is that of the relationships of the participants. Are the adults reading to the children also their parents or caretakers? If so, the program has a least one element of a "family" program because the participants are related. Are the adults reading to the children senior citizens from a neighboring care facility or from a foster grandparents program, working as volunteers? This is more properly an "intergenerational" program as individuals are not related. In Type 1 programs the adults and children are related, in Type 2 programs, they may not be. Obviously, a program with parent/child activities is both a "family "program and an intergenerational one.

TABLE 1

Typology of Family and Intergenerational Literacy Programs

Type of Intervention



Type of Target

Nickse, R.S. Family and Intergenerational Literacy Programs: An Update of the " Noises of Literacy ." ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education Columbus, OH.:Ohio State University 1990.

Each program type has both primary and secondary beneficiaries. For example, a Type 3 program for parents may indirectly benefit the children in that family, although they do not attend the program. Type 4 programs for children may indirectly benefit their parents. Types 1 and 2 benefit both adults and children, but to a different degree.

Which type of program is best for which type of participants is a research question yet to be answered.

Features of Generic Types 1, 2, 3, 4

The targeted populations who participate in programs, whether Type 1, 2, 3, or 4, receive different types of services which vary in a number of features. Table 2 summarizes these for program Types 1, 2, 3, and 4.

(Enter Table 2 here)

Chief differences are program goals, the duration and frequency of services, and the target beneficiaries of the program. The intensity of participation in the program, the amount and nature of contact (whether direct or indirect) and the opportunity to interact and practice new learnings varies. Many Type 3 and 4 are short-term supplementary programs, while Type 1 programs are more likely to require long-term participation. Type 2 programs can be organized over longer time periods but the hours of contact during a given time period may be brief, as in weekly two-hour tutoring sessions for adults. The activities offered may be a series of events rather than an integrated curriculum.

The intended beneficiaries of the services also varies. Type 1 programs recruit parents and their children; Type 2 programs serve adults and children -- in each, an adult/parent and a child are joint beneficiaries. Type 3 programs, however, serve parents without their children; and Type 4 programs serve children without their parents. Each has a secondary beneficiary: in the case of Type 3, the children benefit from parents' participation; in Type 4, the parents' may benefit from the children's participation.

There are inherent difficulties in the evaluation and comparison of family and intergenerational literacy programs due to their key features. Each generic type lends itself to some kind of evaluation, but the levels of sophistication differ. The Typology is a basis for asking questions about effectiveness. What measurement domains are appropriate for a Type 1 program? Would these be appropriate for Types 2, 3, or 4? One way to approach

TABLE 2
Typology for Family and Intergenerational Literacy Programs
A Summary of Features*

Type	Examples of Features	Examples of Concerns	Examples
Type 1 Parent/ Child	Goal is positive, longterm family intervention • parent/child; parent; child; activities • intense, frequent participation • highly structured; formal instruction • integrated curriculum • direct instruction; dual curriculum • ECE/ABE staff team • monitored attendance • dedicated site • long-term intervention	• high time commitment necessary • retention in program • facilities for ECE/ABE together • transportation for families • child care for infants, toddlers • high degree of collaboration • substantial costs to initiate and maintain	• Parental Child Education (PACE, KY) • Kenan Trust (NC; 27 states) • Even Start Programs
Type 2 Adult/ Child	Goal is supplementary, for skill building and enjoyment • non-related adults and children • lower level of intensity, participation • less structured; more informal • weekends, after school programs • collaborations (none to many) • adapted sites • short-term intervention	• no formal, sustained literacy instruction • less intensive participation • less parent/child interaction • parttime staffing • short term programs • costs to initiate and maintain	• Family Intergenerational English Literacy (FIEL, TX) • Stride Rite (MA) • Marin County Library (CA) • Carnegie Library (PA) • Nissan (CA)
Type 3 Adult Alone	Goal is parent education • parents/adults alone - children present infrequently, or not at all • workshop formats; low intensity • peer instruction and practise • "portable" curriculum • parent networking • short-term intervention	• no supervised parent/child interaction • parttime staffing; consultants • parent reports of programs' success • developmentally inappropriate activities may be used by parents • costs to initiate and maintain	• Parents Reading Program (NY; plus) • Linking Home and Work (NY; plus) • Family English Literacy Programs
Type 4 Child Alone	Goal is supplementary school related literacy improvement for children • school-based children, at-home parents • school-linked program • teacher supervised • take-home materials for children • short-term intervention	• parents receive no literacy instruction for themselves • parent may not provide support at home for child • parent may not participate in workshops, rallies	• Chrysler Corp/RIF • Books and Beyond (CA) • Literacy Curriculum Connection (MA)

©Nickse, R.S. (1989a: 1990a; 1990b; 1990c)

these questions is to explore possibilities using the characteristics of the four program types, applied to a model which outlines a framework for evaluation.

Summary of Evaluation Plans for Family Literacy Programs

Recent work of the Illinois Literacy Resource Center proposes an evaluation plan for family literacy programs based on experiences in the evaluation of 22 programs in Illinois (Literacy Resource Center, 1990). The plan is a developmental evaluation framework and is the result of work done by the Center, combining and extending that of Weiss (1988) and Jacobs (1988) in the evaluation of family education programs.

Briefly, the framework includes five levels of evaluation. According to Jacobs "each requires greater effort at data collection and tabulation, increased precision in program definition and a greater commitment to the evaluation process." Each level or tier also fulfills a different purpose, uses different data gathering techniques, and promises information for particular audiences. Although the tiers appear in sequence in Table 3, it is suggested by Jacobs that programs use several tiers, moving from tier to tier (up and down) as appropriate, to document program changes over time. The levels (tiers) of assessment are illustrated in Table 3 and short descriptions follow:

(Enter Table 3A and 3B Here)

Level I Pre-Implementation: Known commonly as "needs assessment" this tier answers the question "What is the problem?" Is there indeed, a need for service?

Level II Accountability: This is the program utilization level, and is a response to the question "Who are we serving, and what services are we providing?"

Level lll Program Clarification: This is the formative or process clarification tier. The guiding question is "How can we do a better job serving our participants?"

Level IV Progress : Measurement of short-term objectives answers the question "Are participants making progress?"

Table 3A
Levels of Evaluation - Basic Research Questions*

Level/Tier	Purpose	Research Questions
Level I	Pre-Implementation needs assessment	Is there a need for family/intergenerational literacy services?
Level II	Accountability	Who are we serving, and what services are we providing?
Level III	Program Clarification	How can we do better job serving our program participants?
Level IV	Participants' Progress	Are participants making progress?
Level V	Program Impacts	What are the long-term effects of program participation?

*Adpated from Jacobs, F. (1988)

TABLE 3 B

Summary of Evaluation Plan for Family Literacy Programs

Purpose of Evaluation	Audiences	Strategies/Tasks	Types of Data to Collect/Analyze	Dissemination of Findings	Program Planning
LEVEL I — Needs Assessment (Preimplimentation) To document the need for services	Funding agencies, citizens, potential participants	Define target population, describe services and benefits	Local demographics, review press coverage, interviews, qualitative/quantitative	Summary report of key findings to agencies, community leaders, press	Change program pl on results of needs assessment
LEVEL II — Accountability (Program Documentation) To determine who is receiving services and what services are provided	Funding agencies, program providers, participants	Determine number of individuals served, portion of population served, what services are used	Count individuals being served, collect and examine data on participant characteristics, review case records of service usage	Formal presentations to staff, funding agencies, press	If targeted populati not served, change or recruiting
LEVEL III — Formative Evaluation (Program Clarification) To improve services lo participants	Staff members, program participants, funding agencies, other program providers	Determine participant satisfaction	Develop questionnaires regarding client satisfaction, personal interviews, phone calls	Staff meetings, participant meetings	Change services ba on results
LEVEL IV — Program Progress (Progress loward Objectives) To determine if participants ure making progress	Funding agencies, community, program providers, external review committee	Document participant progress	Construct surveys, content analyses of program records, standardized instruments, interviews	Formal report, presentations at local, state, and national conferences	Modify evaluation p better represent clie progress
LEVEL V — Program Impact To determine long-term effects of program participation	Program providers, participants, external reviewers	Determine best treatment effects, long-term effects	Collect longitudinal data on changes in participants, compare the effects of different treatments	To program providers, local, state, federal agencies, researchers	Recommend specifi treatment for greate impact

Illinois Literacy Resource Center, The Mechanics of Success: An Illinois Family Literacy Report. Rantoul, IL.: Illinois Literacy Resource Center, 1990.

Level V Program Impact : At this level, the program is committed to an experimental or quasi-experimental approach to evaluate program effects. The question is "What are the long-term effects of program participation?"

When these levels of evaluation are applied to the four generic types of programs, the possibilities for evaluation of Types 1-4 are apparent. Table 4 illustrates this point.

(Enter Table 4 Here)

Theoretically, Type 1 programs offer the most comprehensive possibilities for the richest data about family literacy programs, because all five levels of evaluation are possible to implement, given the resources, willingness, and commitment to document a program with this precision. The Even Start national evaluation, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education and contracted to Abt Associates Inc. of Cambridge, Massachusetts, with RMC Research, Portland, Oregon, is an example of the use of Level 5 evaluation for family literacy programs.

Type 2 programs are less comprehensive, and may be more suitable for evaluation at Levels 1-3 because of their briefer duration and less intense participation. Similarly, Type 3 programs, because they serve parents only, lack detailed data on impacts on children, who are secondary beneficiaries of this program type; Type 4 programs, because they do not involve parents in literacy instruction for their own sake, do not provide rigorous data for evaluating changes in parents' own literacy skills or on parent/child interactions.

There is no implication here that evaluating a program less than completely (using Levels 1-5) is "less good" -- rather, each generic program type presents opportunities for documenting some program information. There is something to be learned from evaluation at each level, and within each program type, as long as the program goals outcomes, and characteristics are tuned to the purposes of the evaluation, and it is carefully conducted.

The content (or domains) for measurement, also might be selected to "match" the characteristics of the evaluation level and the program type. Some suggestions follow in the next section. Participant families should be involved in program design early to co-determine desirable outcomes with staff.

TABLE 4
Possibilities for Evaluation of Program Types 1 - 4 at Five Levels

Type of Program	Need's Assessment Level 1	Accountability Level 2	Process Clarification Level 3	Participant Progress Level 4	Program Impact Level 5
Type 1 Parent/Child Together	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Type 2 Adult/Child Together	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maybe	Not Likely
Type 3 Parent Alone	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maybe	Not Likely
Type 4 Child Alone	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maybe	Not Likely

Some Suggested Domains for Measurement

Depending on the program type, measurement domains can be identified at the program and participant levels.

Program Level

Program design/context.

This domain describes the plan or design of the program, e.g., the target population; the community setting; and the types of core and support services planned for or provided.

Program implementation/processes/inputs.

This domain includes descriptions of the program once it is implemented or operational, and might describe these features e.g., the program resources including staff and funding; the program processes of recruitment, instruction, and selection of materials; attendance and participation strategies; retention strategies; staff development and in-service training agendas; the types of services which support the program such as transportation and child care; workshops or activities for parents; and assessment, particularly measures of participant satisfaction with the program.

Program Outcomes.

Program effects are the short- and long-term impacts and outcomes that the program expects e.g., outcomes of participant progress such as the literacy development of adults and children; increases in educational skills and expectations; changes in behaviors, skills and attitudes at the individual, family, and community level; and increases in personal skills and community involvement for adults. For children, outcomes are often expected to be better preparation for school, or better performance in school settings. Clearly, the overall objectives of programs should be helping families to better help themselves and others. Increased literacy is only one of the components of programs which assists families toward this goal.

Participant Level

At the participant level, there are several possibilities for data collection :

Demographic information.

Demographic information describes participants clearly: data on ethnicity; sex; ages; relationships of participants to each other; prior educational levels of the family and its extended members; job experiences and employment information; and data about the context of the families' lives in their communities.

Literacy skills, environments, and attitudes.

This content domain might include: knowledge about children's emergent literacy; the development of literacy in adults/parents and in the family ; the uses of literacy at home; the uses of literacy in pre-school or school programs; access to literacy materials and literacy events at home and in pre-school or school settings; attitudes and values about education and schooling; and aspirations and expectations about literacy held by individuals, families, and their communities.

Parent/Child Interactions.

This domain might evaluate the interactions between adult/parent and child. This is a a relatively difficult area for data gathering because it is complex and because it lacks a variety of instruments for use. The domain might include parent teaching strategies, attitudes, values, and behaviors around the concept of the " parent-as-teacher; "the climate" of parent/child relationships and their context; and specific literacy efforts, such as parent/child storybook reading or other evidence of improved parent/child literacy interactions, including mutual enjoyment.

Child Personal Characteristics/Achievements.

Characteristics of the child might include cognitive and linguistic development, psychomotor and social development, and emergent literacy concepts. Achievements might indicate growth in this area.

Parent Personal Characteristics/Achievements.

Here, evaluation might explore the parents as individuals, apart but connected to, their roles as parents: for example, parent /learners' sense of self-esteem; their feelings of well-being and personal efficacy; measures of social isolation and maternal depression; and

other factors such as locus of control. Achievements might indicate growth in this area. Caution and restraint should guide explorations in these areas since there is a tension between gathering useful information for program effectiveness and invasion of family privacy, a point to consider in the next domain areas also.

Family Characteristics, Support, and Resources.

Family characteristics, support and resources might include the psychological, economic, and social factors which impinge on families in programs, and measures of coping. While not all participants in programs are at-risk families a proportion of programs do work with them, for example, Kenan, PACE and the Even Start programs. Levels of family stress; types of daily hassles; sources of social support; access to resources; and conditions of families' home environments and communities are part of the context in which families exist. Since they are part of the gestalt within which families live and interact, this data is useful in tailoring programs to participants' needs.

Parenting Behaviors and Attitudes.

An intent of many families and intergenerational literacy programs is to guide families toward successful child-rearing practices. Thus, concepts about child and adult development, attitudes about parenting and discipline, management of family matters, and aspirations and expectations for parenting are a part of this broad domain. Changes in parenting behaviors and attitudes as they are involved in the support of literacy development might be considered important to evaluate.

Choices and More Choices

The content areas noted above are suggested as possibilities and are certainly not exhaustive. The question is,which domains might be evaluated in each generic type? Table 5 illustrates some suggestions for data collection. It is based on data from the programs cited in Table 2 as examples of each generic type. It is not a statement that these levels of evaluation are actually being used. Rather, it is a hypothetical example of what seems possible, using the schema presented here to evaluate "family" and "intergenerational" literacy programs.

(Enter Table 5 Here)

TABLE 5
Suggested Measurement Domains for Family Literacy Program Types 1 - 4

Generic Type	Need's Assessment Level 1	Accountability Level 2	Process Clarification Level 3	Participant Progress Level 4	Program Impact Level 5
Type 1 Parent/Child (Family Literacy)	• demographic information • program design/context	• implementation, process and inputs • family characteristics/ support, resources • parenting behaviors, attitudes	• participant satisfaction • parent/personal characteristics • child/personal characteristics	• short-term effects • literacy skills, environments, attitudes, behavior	• program outcomes • long-term effects - parent/child interactions - literacy skills, attitudes, behavior - parenting behaviors and attitudes - parent's personal characteristics - family characteristics - parent/child achievements - children's achievements
Type 2 Adult/Child (Intergenerational Literacy)	• demographic information • program design/context	• implementation, process, and inputs	• participant satisfaction	Maybe	No
Type 3 Adult Alone (Parent Literacy)	• demographic information • program design/context	• implementation, process, and inputs • family characteristics, support, resources • parenting behaviors, attitudes	• participant satisfaction	Maybe	No
Type 4 Child Alone (Child Literacy)	• demographic information • program design/context	• implementation, process, and inputs	• participant satisfaction	Maybe	No

Both formal and informal measures are desirable in the evaluation of family and intergenerational literacy programs because of their complex nature and the multiple outcomes expected for each generic type.

As Table 5 illustrates, Type 1 programs offer the best opportunity to evaluate outcomes over a long period of time. Changes in participants' on a variety of variables is possible with these intense, long-term programs. Evaluation at each of the Levels 1-5 contributes to knowledge about the effects of family literacy programs on parents and children. This is the kind of evaluation that members of Congress and other policy makers want and need to make judgements about institutionalization of programs. Evaluations are often multiyear studies, using random assignment, comparison groups, or other standards. They are usually externally directed (as in the case of Even Start) and are expensive to conduct. A professional group customarily undertakes evaluations at Level 5 with the cooperation of the local programs.

Program Types 2, 3, and 4 can provide information on program design and context, on implementation processes and inputs, and on participant satisfaction (Levels 1, 2, and 3). Valuable information is gathered which result in services better tailored to participants. Effective programs are internally reflective, with staff sensitive to nuances in program climate. This orientation is necessary, and calls for a certain fluidity of response from staff. Constant tinkering and adjustment through successive approximation leads to program refinement and toward better services in Level 3 evaluations. This is an appropriate goal in and of itself. Without this knowledge, programs may fail to thrive since it is doubtful the services provided truly fit participants' needs: on which participants' satisfaction is based.

Whether Types 2,3, and 4 are able to gather information at Level 4 depends on several factors: the duration, frequency and intensity of services; staff experience with evaluation techniques; funding levels; and especially, time. Rich anecdotal information is available at Levels 2-4 (and also at Level 5). The program staffs' willingness to incorporate more objective measurement means more real time in record keeping. Documentation burdens increase, and it is not unusual that staff resent taking time away from providing direct services to keep records. With shortages of personnel and individuals employed parttime in service delivery, staff may decide that evaluation at Levels 1-3 are sufficient for the audiences they must or wish to, satisfy. However, the challenge to gather data for Level 4 evaluations might be considered at some later date in the programs' life.

Programs that choose to proceed (to Level 4) might benefit from the advice of an external, local evaluator who can form a collaboration with the staff. If program replication

is an objective, evaluators can suggest strategies for data collection that seem feasible and appropriate, and help prepare the reports which are shared with outside audiences. The knowledge base about this fascinating approach to literacy improvement will grow with careful and appropriate evaluations.

Conclusions

Evaluating family interactions and the multiple effects on adults and children tests beyond the existing repertoire of techniques (Weiss and Jacobs, 1988). What is needed is a new battery of instruments and some new approaches to capture the unique effects of family and intergenerational literacy programs.

Family literacy practice is largely uncharted territory, and there will be false starts and misleading data. However, without comprehensive data, we will not know whether this is truly a new and significant step in literacy services, or just another complicated educational fad. The danger is that policy decisions will be made prematurely based on poor evaluation information; especially a concern when expectations for success are so high. A second danger is that, in a quest for data, programs distort their services or frighten away the very participants for whom services are developed. The message to staff is, use judgement when planning evaluation strategies, and tailor the strategies to the program type. At the evaluation level that is appropriate and feasible, do a careful job of data collection: this strategy is defensible. Do not burden an effective parttime program with ambitious evaluations that are not possible to do well, which distort or modify the program unduly, or which might result in a driving participants away, which is particularly possible when they have had no voice in the evaluation plan.

The suggestions proposed in this paper may guide local programs to more satisfactory evaluation procedures which are feasible and appropriate for different program types. If so, the author, who has had many sleepless nights worrying about evaluation in a family and intergenerational literacy program, will sleep more soundly herself!

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